NATIONAL SPIRIT,

CONSIDERED; *AS*,

A Natural Source of Political Liberty.

THE SECOND EDITION.

WITH AN

APPENDIX.

Aliæ nationes ſervitutem pati poſſunt,
Nobis propria libertas eſt. Cic.

LONDON,
Printed for R. BALDWIN, at the *Roſe* in *Pater-Noſter-Row* *MDCCLVIII.*

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MAY, 28, 1913
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ENGLISH HISTORICAL TRACTS

SECTION I.

THERE is a judgment often formed of men, in their private characters, from the political principles and intereſts they are known publicly to have eſpouſed; which, for obvious reaſons, can never be reckoned very candid, or impartial. The contending parties in a ſtate beſtow appellations upon one another, which are generally expreſſive of ſomething abſurd, and opprobrious; or paſs for what is ſo in common acceptation. Theſe *denominations*, when affixed to a character, repreſent it to many, as tainted with the violence and bigotry of a party; the idea of which creates averſion and diſguſt to people of cool and indifferent minds. The more ſanguine, and ſuch as breathe the flaming ſpirit of their faction, often require no more to fill them with abhorrence of any perſon, than to be aſſured, that he hath adopted the oppoſite ſyſtem: And, then, the moſt undeniable good qualities aſcribed to him, are keenly conteſted; and

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any act of generoſity he is known to have done, appears to have loſt, at leaſt, half of its intrinſic value.

Certain it is, that no political tenets whatever can be ſuppoſed to conſtitute a perſonal character; or ſupply the place of genius, temper, and manners in any man. When the latter appear to be wholly moulded upon the former; the conduct in private life will be liable to various, and perhaps not unjuſt accuſations; eſpecially in a nation where parties prevail, and factions inflame one another. The only genuine merit belonging to a perſon's political perſuaſion, conſiſts in its being ſuch, as beſt correſponds with the culture and enlargement of the mind; the exerciſe of truly public affections; and perſeverance in the love, and ſervice of *one*'s country.

Every man, indeed, may flatter himſelf with a high conceit of his own theory in government; and imagine it to be more noble and rational than any other. Yet ſurely, when it happens to interfere, or diſagree with the eſtabliſhed ſyſtem of his country, it muſt be owned not to be well adapted to animate him to his public duty, or incite him to fulfil the moſt important ends of human ſociety. Being wedded to his private principles, he may not only decline acting in his proper ſphere, for the ſervice and intereſt of the public; but his affections may become ſo far alienated from it, as to prevent his ſharing, equally with others, the natural viciſſitudes of joy,

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for its ſucceſs, or of grief, for the loſſes it ſuſtains. On account of this ſimple conſideration, it is to be wiſhed, that men were not biaſſed (as too many in *Great Britain* are) by early prejudices againſt the political maxims publicly embraced in their country; and kept from viewing the form of government, under which they live, with that friendly eye, which it may be found to deſerve both from nature and reaſon.

Since arguments of the political kind engroſs the largeſt ſhare of ordinary converſation in this country, and the generality of people are diſpoſed to employ much of their wit and reflexion upon queſtions relating to government, it will not, I hope, be deemed an uſeleſs or improper attempt, to trace the ſubject higher than many of our daily pamphlet-writers take time to do; and, after ſtating the arguments, which have been alledged in favour of the various ſyſtems of government; to inquire, *Whether* from ſpeculative principles, or from the nature and genius of a people, the preference of one ſyſtem to another has been generally determined in the world. It will appear, in proſecuting this point, that the *European* and *Aſiatic* nations, have, in general, at all times, been diſtinguiſhed from one another by a different political taſte; the former being inclined to liberty, and the latter to deſpotiſm. Some general cauſes of the decline of the ſpirit of freedom in

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the modern ſtates and kingdoms of *Europe*, may then be pointed out; and ſome corrolaries drawn from the main argument, to ſhow the abſurdity of condemning any political eſtabliſhment, which ſuits the genius and circumſtances of a people; and of adhering to the principles of a ſyſtem, when at variance with the national ſpirit. The *influence* of freedom upon the temper and genius of a people, and the ſuppoſed connexion of public liberty and national courage, will next be conſidered. An *explication* of the political ſentiments which operate in the abſolute monarchies of *Europe* being given; it may then be inquired how far they are to be looked upon as permanent, or changeable. A *ſketch* of the hiſtory of *Britain*, as an illuſtrious example of national ſpirit always exerting itſelf, and generally with ſucceſs, in favour of public liberty; the remarkable correſpondence of our national character, and the freedom of our conſtitution; along with ſome collateral reflexions; conclude the deſign of the following pages.

Though we ſhould ſuppoſe, that there were one particular ſpecies of government, which originally took place in the world; when human ſocieties, conſiſting of ſingle families, or ſmall tribes, were nearly equal in ſituation and circumſtances: yet it is evident, that this ſyſtem, whatever it was, could not long continue, without being diverſified in ſome degree, or totally

totally changed. For, as mankind enlarged their ſocieties; and, for the ſake of procuring the advantages of life, removed their ſettlements to a greater diſtance, from each other; they would ſoon find it neceſſary to vary their method of government, according to the different ſituations, in which they happened to be placed. Thus the elements of ſeveral political ſyſtems would be introduced amongſt them. Experience would gradually diſcover what was requiſite to the improvement of thoſe rude models; and men of genius applying themſelves to the ſtudy of policy, would, in progreſs of time, comprehend its higheſt refinements. Whether, indeed, politics may be properly termed the *firſt philoſophy* †, it is needleſs to diſpute. But it can hardly be denied to have been one of the firſt cultivated *ſciences*. The moſt antient philoſophers were all converſant in it; and many of them famed as *legiſlators*. Hence the three capital ſyſtems, *monarchy, ariſtocracy, democracy*, being once eſtabliſhed; to compare the excellencies and diſadvantages of each of them, became a conſtant ſubject of ſpeculation and controverſy amongſt the learned, in ſeveral countries; and particularly in *Greece*, and its colonies; in which the moſt various learning and policy prevailed. We find a paſſage in the oldeſt of the *Greek* hiſtorians, where this queſtion is ſo ingeniouſly and conciſely repreſented,

† See Lord *Bollingbroke*'s letters to Mr. *Pope*.

ſented, that it will be ſufficient to tranſcribe this antient ſtate of the argument; and the rather that it comprehends as much as many prolix modern treatiſes, that have been wrote upon the ſubject.

When the uſurpation, by the *Magi*, of the antient throne of *Perſia* was extinguiſhed, we are told, that the few, but ſucceſsful *conſpirators*, conſulted together, how they might beſt diſpoſe of the vacant ſovereignty. They were of different opinions about the moſt eligible form of government; and the debate proceeded in the following manner.

"Every principle, and end of government (ſaid "one) is ſubverted in an abſolute monarchy; where "the arbitrary will of the prince uſurps the place "of laws. Suppoſing him to be the moſt virtuous "of the human race; is not the poſſeſſion of ſuch "unlimited power, ſufficient to produce an entire "change in his ſentiments and behaviour? The af-"fluence of proſperity will ſpirit him up to inſo-"lence; and yet the remainder of his natural fears "will render him jealous of other men. Let it, on-"ly, be conſidered, what a train of unjuſt actions "may flow from theſe two vices. If it be alledged, "that one, who hath abſolute dominion in a ſtate, "can neither, entertain envy, nor jealouſy of men "placed ſo far below him; yet experience will ſhow "it to be quite otherways; and that the good or "eminent qualties of ſome will often excite the mo-

narch's

" narch's envy: So that he will incline to make con-
" fidents of ſuch, as are of a very oppoſite charac-
" ter to them. And, as the grounds he hath for jea-
" louſy are many; he will be ready to take offence,
" whether men be ſparing, or laviſh of their applauſe.
" But, far worſe things are to be dreaded from the
" paſſions, and caprice of an arbitrary prince. For,
" what ſecurity can a nation have, againſt his infring-
" ing the moſt fundamental laws of ſociety; and rapa-
" ciouſly ſeizing, according to his pleaſure, the wives,
" the children, or properties of his ſubjects? On
" the contrary, when the ſovereign power reſides in
" the people, a conſtitution takes place, truly noble,
" and founded upon equal laws: And the outrages,
" inevitable, under the government of a ſingle per-
" ſon, are prevented. In a common-wealth the pub-
" lic offices and places are diſtributed by lot, or ro-
" tation. Every magiſtrate hath only a delegated
" juriſdiction; for the exerciſe of which he becomes
" accountable. The wiſdom of the ſtate, communi-
" cated in public councils, is rendered ſubſervient
" to the general good. And, what government can
" be deemed ſo juſt, as a popular ſyſtem; ſince the
" ſource of all power, and privilege is found in the
" people?"

" I will allow (ſaid another) that the lawleſs pow-
" er of one perſon is an abſurd eſtabliſhment in any
" ſtate; but the ſovereignty of the people is ſtill

" more irrational. For what ſo void of underſtand-
" ing, and ſo prone to inſult as the *multitude!* If the
" inſolence of one ſingle perſon is to be dreaded and
" ſhunned; how inſupportable muſt that of the li-
" centious *rabble* appear? The former, hath, at leaſt,
" the ſenſe of knowing at what he aims; but the
" latter is incapable of any ſort of reflexion. Sunk
" in ignorance, and wanting the means of inſtructi-
" on, the populace can never diſcern, either what
" is fit, or honourable in the conduct of affairs; but
" ruſh on, with a blind impetuoſity, like a torrent
" ſwelled with the winter-rain. If confuſion and
" miſchief are to be introduced into a ſtate; the rea-
" dieſt method of doing it is, to lodge ſupreme pow-
" er in the hands of the common people. A *ſenate*,
" compoſed of the *grandees*, hath the only juſt title
" to ſovereign authority. By their knowledge and
" abilities, the honour and intereſt of a nation muſt
" be beſt maintained."

" It is demonſtrable (ſaid a third) that the multitude
" are utterly unqualified to bear rule. A government
" conſtituted of the nobles or chief men in a ſtate,
" is alſo liable to many juſt objections. Monarchy
" is, undoubtedly, preferable to them both, as being
" more ſimple in its form; and capable of exiſting in
" greater perfection, than either a common-wealth,
" or an ariſtocracy. A prince, who has abilities and
" penetration, will govern in ſuch a manner, as to

" remedy

" remedy the grievances, and prevent the complaints
" of his people. His counſels will not be diſcloſed
" to the ſecret or avowed enemies of the ſtate. Tho',
" in an ariſtocracy, the parts and induſtry of many,
" ſeem to be combined for the ſervice of the public;
" yet the tye of common intereſt is not ſtrong e-
" nough to reſiſt the violence of private feuds and
" animoſities, which never fail to break out, in ſuch
" a conſtitution. For, by every one's aſpiring to
" become *a leader*; and to give the *tone* to the ſuf-
" frages of the ſenate, inveterate reſentments are
" kindled, ſeditions ariſe; maſſacres and anarchy
" follow: which can have no end, but in the domi-
" nion of a ſingle perſon. And, thus, all forms of
" government will change, revert to *monarchy*, and
" terminate in it, as being the principal and ſuper-
" eminent model. In a *democracy* a ſpirit of detracti-
" on and malice is ſure to ſpread abroad. The public
" meaſures and management are made the ſubject of
" reproach and obloquy; and ſecret cabals are form-
" ed to hatch theſe calumnies, which, begetting con-
" fidence and friendſhip, amongſt thoſe who meet
" together, from their diſguſt and enmity againſt
" the public, ripen at laſt into deſperate plots and
" conſpiracies. In this extremity, a people have
" no other reſource, but to devolve the power of
" protecting them upon ſome *individual*, who being
" ſucceſsful becomes their *idol*; and conſequently

" their

" their monarch. But, to conclude the argument; " the abilities of a ſingle perſon have generally pro- " cured the greateſt bleſſings and advantages to a " people; and few nations there are that boaſt of " public liberty, but have owed it to the *heroiſm* of " ſome illuſtrious chief."

When the arguments, for monarchial or democratical government are, in ſuch a ſpeculative way, weighed and canvaſſed; they appear ſo equally balanced, that cool and impartial reaſon muſt heſitate; and be at a loſs in deciding which of them have the ſuperiority. It is obvious, that certain advantages, and diſadvantages do attend both ſyſtems; and that, tho' the main ends of government are attainable in either of them, the diſtinct and ſeparate properties of the one cannot be transferred to the other. The difficulty is not to be ſolved, by ſaying, according to the common rule, that the ſyſtem which hath the feweſt inconveniencies is to be prefered. For, unleſs mankind could agree in reckoning which of thoſe diſadvantages are to be regarded as moſt material, the queſtion muſt remain upon the ſame doubtful foot, as before. But this point depending more upon human imagination and taſte, than on principles of reaſon, is extremely difficult to be fixed, by the concurring ſentiments of individuals who live together in the ſame country; much more, by any uniform opinion of mankind in different ages and nations.

ons. It may be obſerved, that the partizans of *monarchy*, both antient and modern, have conſidered party-ſpirit, faction, and popular tumults, as the greateſt bane to the felicity of government, and thought the perfection of policy conſiſted in guarding againſt any tendency to ſuch diſorders. The favourers of *democracy*, on the contrary, have been generally inclined to make light of thoſe inconveniencies, or to look upon them, as neither ſo repugnant to the nature of government, nor ſo pernicious in their effects; as an unlimited ſubjection to the arbitrary will and power of a ſingle perſon. It is not an eaſy matter to enter into the calculation; and, by an appeal to the hiſtory and experience of mankind, to eſtimate, whether greater national evils have been produced by the tyranny of princes, or the factions of a republic. After the moſt induſtrious collation of facts, and examining all that the learned have advanced upon this topic, we can only infer, that the *democratical* ſyſtem has ſucceeded beſt in ſome countries and nations, and the *monarchial* in others †. Therefore, we need not wonder, that the ſtandard

† It may be ſaid, that the antient common-wealths of *Greece* were early founded by their legiſlators, upon ſpeculative principles of policy; at leaſt there appears to be greater reaſon for affirming this with regard to them, than any other governments, whoſe eſtabliſhment we know, either in antient or modern times: But, as is remarked below, there alſo were, plainly, ſome peculiarities in the ſituation of *Greece*, that favoured the riſe of ſuch a number of democracies.

ſtandard of policy in different parts of the world, has, in fact, been generally regulated by the particular genius, temper, and ſituation of the people; rather than by any ſpeculative principles of government; which are too abſtracted in their own nature, and too variable in their influence, to affect the bulk of mankind.

The continent of *Europe* has long exhibited almoſt as many diverſe portraits of government, as there are ſeparate ſtates and kingdoms in it. The people of antient *Greece* expreſſed their idea of any regular political ſyſtem, by a word *, which ſignifies, in the idiom of their language, the government of many. The governments, which antiently prevailed in *Italy*, *Gaul*, *Germany*, and *Spain*; (before theſe countries were conquered by the *Romans*) were all democratical, or republican. Tho' the people had nothing of the philoſophy, ſcience, or manners of the *Greeks*; they reſembled them in being averſe to the government of a ſingle perſon, and exploding monarchy. All the *Aſiatic*, or eaſtern nations, on the contrary, appear to have entertained no other; or ſoon to have loſt the idea of every other government, but of deſpotiſm. The whole ſcience and learning they poſſeſſed, never ſufficed to carry them off from this one rude ſyſtem of policy; to which, by general conſent, ſucceſſive generations adhered.

This

* Πολιτια.

This political contraſt, which appears in the nations of *Europe*, and thoſe of *Aſia*, can perhaps be ſufficiently accounted for, in no other way, but by ſaying, that the genius and temper of mankind is extremely different in thoſe different regions of the earth; and that the operation of phyſical cauſes muſt concur to produce this diſtinction of taſte, which is known to have been ſo generally prevalent. It would ſeem, that the people inhabiting the warm and ſoft climates of the eaſt and ſouth, ever prefer indolence and quiet to all other conſiderations; and, rather than be active in the maintenance of their natural rights, tamely ſubmit, upon any tolerable proſpect of preſent ſafety and protection, to bear the yoke of abſolute government. Content with a ſmall proviſion for their immediate wants, and afraid of toil more than of poverty; they challenge not the authority of their rulers, nor are ſolicitous, in examining upon what foundation the public intereſt ſtands. But the northern nations, bred in a ſharper air, and more penurious ſoil, are rendered vigorous in body, and mind; enterprizing and forward to graſp whatever ſerves as a proviſion againſt want. What they gain by hardſhip, they are anxious to ſecure; and dread even the reſtraints of civil life and government, unleſs the defence and care of the property of individuals be made the public concern. The *Grecians* partook of this active and induſtrious

ſpirit,

ſpirit; tho' their climate was more contiguous to that of *Aſia*, than any other in *Europe*. Their ſoil, in many places, was not very fertile; and the whole region poſſeſſed by them was of no great compaſs, and broken by ſeas, rivers and mountains; which naturally divided them into a number of ſmall ſtates; the proper nurſeries of republican governments. As they excelled other nations in all works of genius and invention, ſo they were highly diſtinguiſhed by a ſingular reliſh of public liberty; which, however, paſſed no farther into the continent of *Aſia* than the *Greek* colonies planted on its coaſt.

When the *Gothic* nations extended their conqueſts over *Europe*, the officers and ſoldiers of their armies ſhared in the conquered territories; as well as the chieftains. The victorious general claimed only a larger lot of lands, with ſome ſplendid deſignation, for himſelf; while the bulk of *property* was diſtributed amongſt the captains of his troops: who, retaining the uſe of arms, were readily arrayed to defend it from foreign attacks; and were careful, in time of peace, to guard it, by public laws and ſtatutes, againſt all domeſtic uſurpation. Upon this baſis, aroſe the *Gothic governments*; formed, like nature's handy-work, with amazing boldneſs and ſymmetry; the principles of the antient policy appearing to be reverſed in them; and by a combination of *monarchy*, *ariſtocracy*, and *democracy*, generally held to be inconſiſtent,

conſiſtent; a new ſyſtem, partaking of the advantages of each of them, was eſtabliſhed. The diviſion of the ſupreme power followed that of the property; thus ſhared among the ſeveral orders of the community: The *duke*, or *prince*, the *peers*, and in proceſs of time, the heads, or what we now call repreſentatives of the *commons*, compoſed one *legiſlature*. This mixed form of government, called by political writers the *Gothic* balance, prevailed almoſt every where in *Europe*, for many generations.

There is no ſuch thing, indeed, as perfect ſtability, or uniformity to be expected in any of the affairs of mankind. The *European* governments do not now bear ſuch reſemblance to one another, as they, probably did in the moſt antient times, or even ſome centuries ago. Various cauſes have concurred to change the *political face* of *Europe;* to ſmooth, here and there, the rough features of liberty, with which it was formerly marked; or altogether to obliterate them. The variable policy and artifices of courts; the fluctuation of manners; diviſions about ſyſtems political and religious; the advancement of arts, navigation, and commerce; the introduction of wealth and luxury, have produced many alterations. By the influence of theſe and other cauſes, the temper and ſpirit of the ſeveral nations of *Europe* have undergone a remarkable change; and conſequently the *ſprings* and principles of the antient policy are ge-

nerally relaxed and varied. The modern republics are, therefore, not like thoſe of antient *Greece;* formed upon principles of virtue and heroiſm, and regulated by it. Our abſolute monarchies retain nothing more of the old *Gothic* ſyſtem; but the nominal rank and order of *nobles*, together with certain conſtitutional forms of law and judicature. The limited ones, which have preſerved the beſt modifications of it; and afford the fulleſt enjoyment of civil liberty; are expoſed, by the diſuſe or neglect of arms, to be inſulted from abroad; while the growing arts of luxury, and corruption much impair and endanger their domeſtic privileges.

Tho' the genius of the *European* nations may be obſerved to ſtand in ſuch direct oppoſition to deſpotiſm; † that, hardly, in the moſt barbarous of them all, is its ferocity endured; yet have many of our politicians, both by ſpeculation and practice, endeavoured to rear up this *exotic* pile of government; and cover its hated aſpect with the ſhroud of reaſon, and religion. What *Machiavel* wrote, in a ſtyle ſo like the groſs policy of the *Aſiatic* monarchs, as if he had copied out the maxims of the *Seraglio;* was addreſſed to the princes of *Europe*, and paſſed, with much courtly applauſe, for the eſſence of true politics.

† It is obſerved, that, even in *Muſcovy*, the government has made ſeveral efforts to emerge from deſpotiſm. *L'eſprit des laix, liv. 5. chap. 14*

tics. In *Britain*, the country of *Europe*, which is more than any other the ſeat of antient liberty *, the principles of deſpotic government were unfolded in an elaborate treatiſe; and thoſe of morality and natural religion attempted to be overthrown for their ſake. Happily, for the benefit of many great and populous ſtates; the poiſon of this infamous ſyſtem, whether recommended in the books of the learned; hatched in the cabinets of kings; or diſpenſed under the terror of the ſword; hath been generally expelled by the native genius and ſpirit of the people in *Europe*.

As it is the height of ſophiſtry, in political ſpeculations, to lay down a ſcheme of government adapted to all mankind; ſince all principles and forms of policy have ſuch a neceſſary connexion with the climate, the temper, the manners, and other circumſtances of a nation, that their being fit or unfit, is generally determinable from thence; as the *European* nations, for ſeveral ages, knew and followed no other principles of government, but what moſt indulged their natural bent to liberty, and correſponded with their ſeveral public intereſts and ſituations: *It muſt follow*, That monarchy, ariſtocracy, democracy, or any compound of theſe political forms, are all equally natural; and may be each of them eligible and convenient for different communities of men;

that

* *Hobbes*'s leviathan.

that an abhorrence of *Aſiatic* deſpotiſm is highly natural to the people of *Europe;* whoſe ſpirit and genius leading them to cultivate other political ſyſtems, are violently combated and ſhocked by it; *that,* the revival of the ſenſe of *political* liberty, which appears to have declined, or vaniſhed in ſome *European* monarchies, may be expected as a natural event; *that,* in any nation enjoying a free government, there can be nothing more abſurd and inconſiſtent, than to eſpouſe a political *creed* that contradicts the national ſpirit; and renders the memory of any revolution made in favour of civil and religious liberty, a ground of party-antipathy, diſcontent and faction,

SECTION

SECTION II.

THE *European* nations may be diſtinguiſhed, not only, from the *Aſiatics*, but alſo, from one another, by a variation of their political character; according as the ſpirit and ſenſe of liberty are more or leſs retained in the different modern ſyſtems embraced amongſt them. For, in ſome countries of *Europe*, the influence of public freedom is fully exerted; in others, it is reſtrained and fettered by monarchial government.

The attachment which free nations have to their political ſyſtem is very remarkable. Wherever the idea or ſentiment of public liberty is entertained and diffuſed amongſt a people; it is apt to be cheriſhed more than any other. Scarcely are the moſt natural impreſſions of religion more fondly foſtered in the human breaſt. The ardent love of freedom is not only diſplayed, by the moſt vigorous and obſtinate defence of it, againſt the attacks of other nations; but alſo, by a calm and fixed diſdain of all ſuch of them, as are governed by o-

ther

ther principles of policy. This effect of the ſenſe of liberty was apparent among the *Greeks* and *Romans*; the former of which, notwithſtanding their poliſhed and elegant manners, affixed the name of *Barbarians* upon all the nations ruled by a monarch; and, in their fineſt writings, characteriſed the *Perſians* as ſlaves and beaſts of burden. The latter came nothing ſhort of the ſame national pride in their liberty; and boaſted of their being the ſcourges of tyrants, and of bringing the mightieſt kings to bow *before the majeſty of the Roman people.* Indeed, no ſtate or ſociety of men, whether barbarous or civilized, weak or powerful, ever thought themſelves poſſeſſed of public freedom, but counted upon it as dignifying their character; and exalting them to a pitch of excellence and felicity; to which no other human honour or glory could be compared. Numberleſs examples of this natural enthuſiaſm are found both in antient and modern hiſtory: And, therefore, we need not wonder, that, in all ſtates at preſent conſtituted upon any model of political liberty, and eſpecially in *Great Britain*, where the faireſt and moſt regular forms of it are preſerved, the ſparks of this kind of ſpirit ſhould diſcover themſelves; and appear, perhaps, in ſuch a ſhape and manner, as on account of the more frequent intercourſe of nations, the more civilized ſtate of the world, and the improvement of ſome abſolute

governments

governments in modern times, may be cenſured, as mere national arrogance and pride. But, tho' the views which mankind take, either of their perſonal qualities, or thoſe pertaining to their country, be generally affected by the *medium* of ſelfiſhneſs and vanity; yet, certain it is, that if national advantages are to be boaſted of, liberty may challenge the preference to all others. For, it is the only natural ſource of law; by which the enjoyment of life and property is ſecured; the protectreſs of arts, and the cheriſher of every liberal ſcience and ſtudy, which improves and adorns human nature. Theſe precious fruits may be tranſplanted into the region of abſolute government; but they are not natives of ſuch a ſoil: nor will they ever flouriſh there; unleſs the civilized ſtate of a monarchy, and a courſe of regular and mild adminiſtration abate the dread of arbitrary ſway, and aſſimulate it to a milder ſyſtem. But free governments give them birth; being calculated to excite the various powers of the human mind, to afford exerciſe and vigour to them all, and ſo to animate the ſpirit of emulation in every liberal art, that no track to public fame and applauſe may be left unattempted. Thus the benign influence of freedom elevates the genius of a people to its higheſt pitch; while the dependence, if not the oppreſſion, which is more immediately felt in abſolute monarchies, proves a reſtraint upon mens minds; and the

general

general *policy* of government tends to fetter their faculties, confine their aims; and reduce them to proceed in one and the ſame uniform tenor of opinions and actions.

Some political writers have extended this theory ſo far, as to ſuppoſe, that the natural valour of a people is not only heightened and improved under a free government; but that this quality cannot exiſt, in any eminent degree, ſeparate from liberty. 'Tis certain, that from a ſenſe of the value of public freedom, and the natural influence of ſuch a political eſtabliſhment, men will acquire an habitual intrepidity, and be animated to the moſt gallant actions: And hence the boldeſt enterprizes have been atchieved, and the largeſt empires in the world conquered by nations that were free. But the ſpirit of freedom, untutored by a martial education, and diſjoined from regular diſcipline, can never be reckoned upon, as ſufficient to oppoſe the aſſaults of any foreign power, that, together with equal numbers, hath had the advantage of being trained to arms, and exerciſed in war. The antient nations of *Italy* were, almoſt all of them, as free, ſeveral of them more numerous, and ſome of them, as brave as the *Romans*, who attacked them; yet the attention of the latter to diſcipline, their military ſkill and conduct acquired by perpetual conteſts in the field, gave them the ſuperiority, and rendered them, at length, every

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where victorious. The ardent love of liberty produced the glorious reſolution in the ſtates of *Athens* and *Sparta*, to undertake the defence of *Greece*, againſt the powerful *Perſian* monarchy, aſſembled to overwhelm it. But, it was the military ſkill and diſcipline of the *Spartans*, in which they as much ſurpaſſed their foes as in courage, that enabled *Leonidas*, with his devoted band, to choak the ſtraits of *Thermopylæ* with heaps of the ſlain: It was the admirable art of the *Grecian* commanders, who took all advantages of the enemy in the field of *Platea*, joined to the experience and order of their ſoldiers, that routed the tenfold force of *Mardonius*'s army; and re-eſtabliſhed the freedom of *Greece*. When *Athens* and *Sparta* both declined; the one, from public ſpirit and love of glory; and the other, from the ſeverity of her antient manners and diſcipline; the *Macedonians* ſuddenly roſe to the dominion of all *Greece*; and, without having their ſpirits foſtered by that freedom, which the other ſtates enjoyed, but by dint of martial diſcipline alone, which *Philip* and *Alexander* gave them, made the intire conqueſt of the *Perſian* empire; to which the *Grecians* had long aſpired. When all the illuſtrious proofs we have to produce for the warlike renown of the freeſt nations do, in this manner, as much demonſtrate the ſuperiority of their military diſcipline, as of their courage; and when it appears, by conſpicuous inſtances, that

the ſame diſcipline hath been carried to perfection, and crowned with equal ſucceſs under monarchical and arbitrary governments; the argument, for eſtimating the valour and military proweſs of a people only from the prevalence of public liberty among them, muſt become altogether ambiguous, and loſe much of its credit and force. With reference to the nations of *Europe* and *Aſia*, it may be allowed, in general, to hold true; the difference of political ſituation, between them, being ſo remarkably great, as to account for a conſiderable variation of ſpirit and temper; beſides what ariſes from climate: And, for this reaſon, the antient *Greeks*, comparing themſelves with the ſubjects of the *Perſian* monarch, might with juſtice challenge a ſuperiority of courage. But certainly little ſtreſs ought to be laid upon ſuch argument, with reſpect to the nations of *Europe*, compared with one another; and eſpecially now, when, according to the modern ſyſtem of armies, the ſoldiers in every country are levied from the loweſt claſs of the people, who enjoy no property; and, being ſubjected to military law, may be ſuppoſed, every where alike, to have reſigned their ſenſe of public liberty for the enjoyment of preſent *pay*.

All governments in the world have their reſort; ſome method of applying to the paſſions, the opinions or prejudices of the people; and intereſting them in their behalf: No matter what the principle be;

if it only co-incide with the peculiar caſt of the national manners and character. In one part of the globe, fear is ſo quick and powerful a paſſion, that the ſingle point ſtudied in government is to preſent the objects of it. There the abſolute domination of husbands and fathers, in their families, early ſtamps the idea of incontroulable ſway upon the minds of the riſing progeny. Accuſtomed to bear domeſtic tyranny, they behold the fierce rage and cruelty of deſpotiſm in the ſtate, with much ſervile dread and diſmay; but with nothing of that horror and indignation excited in all manly ſouls, at the ſight of actions ſhocking to humanity; and which preſently inſpires a noble and determined reſolution, to reſiſt, at all hazards, the deteſtable power, that produces them. Nay, ſo ſtrongly rivetted among them are the fetters of the tyrannical ſyſtem; that, with ſuperſtitious reverence and awe, they yield their necks to the fatal blow, when it might be eluded, or returned upon their ſavage lords. That deſpotiſm itſelf ſhould thus be worſhiped, with all the devotion that abject fear can pay; may juſtly appear aſtoniſhing to another part of mankind, whoſe glory and felicity it is, to preſerve lively impreſſions of what is due to human nature; and to have government maintained by far milder and juſter *tyes* of policy. In the countries, of *Europe*, where, by the *umbrage* of monarchy, the notions of public liberty are intire-

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ly darkened; the force of education, and a deference to religion, have ſubſtituted other notions in their room, for the ſupport of government, and the ſatisfaction of the people. The glory of their monarch, the point of honour, a zeal for the true faith, are the political tyes; by which they are held in a ſort of voluntary ſubjection to their princes, and induced to act in concert, with all their ambitious and extravagant projects: So that, in making conqueſts eſpecially, thoſe governments not only vye with other ſtates, where the principles of public freedom take place; but being aſſured of ready military ſervice, and nothing awed by the murmurs of the people, they often outſhine them in carrying on ſuch enterprizes, with expedition and ſucceſs. There are, thus, a variety of reſources in human nature, which, in particular monarchies of *Europe*, have been applied, in order to allay and ſoften the averſion, that the people naturally have to arbitrary government. While a general moderation in the exerciſe of power, and a proper regard to the temper and manners of the nation, are adhered to, as the plan of the ſovereign's adminiſtration; the people, either do but ſlightly feel, or, by a happy oblivion, forget the ſurrender that hath been made of public liberty. Yet, how loth and dilatory to part with any ſhadow of it, the conſiderate and ſenſible part of a nation will be; does evidently appear from the daring efforts that

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are, even at this day,* uſed to retain freedom's lateſt breath, by a diſtinguiſhed order of men in a neighbouring kingdom; where the people have naturally the greateſt gaiety, and eaſineſs of temper; and where the principles of government are allowed to be the beſt that ever obtained in any abſolute monarchy. The tranſports of a heated imagination alone, can make one behold thoſe moderate governments in the ſame odious light with deſpotiſm; but, from the impreſſions of liberty being barely alive in the mind, it is natural for men to look upon its ruins with regret; which put a free people in mind, that what a nation once eſteemed its greateſt glory and benefit, may, by a proceſs of events, be ſtript away; and public liberty be exchanged for the fictitious honours, and pomp of a monarchical and arbitrary ſyſtem.

The growth and advancement of monarchical and abſolute government, among the nations of *Europe*, has been promoted by the ſtronger and more powerful ſtates invading the weaker; by principalities and kingdoms of large extent being, in this manner, erected; and by the ſlow and gradual encroachments of princes upon public liberty. When thoſe attempts were carried on in a more open and direct way, the people ſtruggled hard to maintain their privileges; and

* The proceedings of the parliament of *Paris* againſt the clergy and court.

and re-iterated ſcenes of civil war enſued, which fill up the hiſtory of every modern kingdom. The unlimited power of kings, as it now prevails in ſome countries, ſtands ſupported not merely, by an armed force; but by bending and directing the genius and temper of the people a contrary way to that which was the former tendency of both. Armies, indeed, are kept up in time of profound peace; and formed into a ſtanding and ſeparate order of the kingdom; while nobility of blood, and antient family-dignities are obſcured and ſunk, by putting a certain military rank upon an equal foot of honour with them. But, as no revolution in government can become, in any degree, fixed or complete, unleſs the national manners co-incide with it: It is plain, that the people in thoſe monarchies have contracted a turn of temper and character ſuitable to their political eſtabliſhment; and that, by means of luxury, and other engines of ſlavery, the antient taſte for public liberty is baniſhed from among them. We cannot, however, juſtly infer, even from ſuch a reverſe of the political character of a people, that the ſpirit of freedom is gone beyond all probable proſpect of being revived: Since we may obſerve, from hiſtory, that the manners and character of every *European* nation are apt to fluctuate and change. Tho' the inhabitants of the ſame country may preſerve, in different ages, ſome general ſimilitude of character; yet, the variations, which

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their genius and ſpirit undergo, are vaſtly remarkable and ſurpriſing. The hiſtory of the *French* nation, when viewed at the interval of little more than half a century, preſents a perfect contraſt †. The moſt inhuman aſſaſſinations and maſſacres blacken the annals of their civil wars, during the reigns of *Charles* IX. and *Henry* III. In the commotions under *Lewis* XIII. and the minority of *Lewis* XIV. the ſpirit of oppoſition to the court, tho' kindled from ſome remaining ſparks of the former flame, never roſe, amongſt the party-leaders, to an equal height with that of private intrigue and gallantry; the influence of which over-ruled the whole conteſt that then happened about public privileges. Such a change in the manners and ſentiments of the nation appears to have taken place, as rendered it no leſs impracticable to form any proper *barrier* againſt the abſolute power of the court, than it proved in *Britain*, at that time, to eſtabliſh a common-wealth upon any ſolid or durable foundation. The *Engliſh* nation indured many oppreſſive and tyrannical acts of power, under * *Henry* VIII. and in the two following

† *D'Avila*'s hiſtory of the civil wars of *France*, compared with the memoirs of Cardinal *Retz*.

* This, indeed, is accounted for, by ſome of our hiſtorians, from a political cauſe; and it muſt be owned, with great appearance of truth. The influence of the commons had been raiſed by *Henry VII.* in oppoſition to that of the lords; which produced

ing reigns, with ſuch tameneſs; that not only any counterpoiſe of freedom in their conſtitution appeared to be loſt; but the ſpirit of liberty itſelf ſeemed to be almoſt extinguiſhed. But a moſt remarkable change, at no great diſtance of time, ſucceeded this low ebb of national ſpirit; which, having been held under various reſtraints, yet not ſubdued; tampered with, yet not corrupted by the influence of monarchy; recollected all its natural ſtrength and vigour; and bore down before it every thing that made the ſhew of oppoſition. There, may, thus, be obſerved very conſiderable variations, in national characters; and in the prevalence and energy of the ſpirit of freedom, when two *European* nations are compared together; and likewiſe when the character of the ſame people is ſurveyed in different periods. Wherefore, that calm and tranquil ſtate, into which ſome *European* monarchies are preſently ſmoothed, is rather, to be deemed temporary and precarious, than laſting and durable. The *Aſiatic* nations, among whom the ſame political ſyſtem has prevailed from age to age; are known alſo to be addicted

produced a colliſion very favourable to an abſolute ſway of the crown, over both. For a conſiderable ſpace of time, the two powers in the ſtate balanced each other; till the greater weight of the commons, came, at length, to be felt. This obſervation, tho' juſt, is not inconſiſtent with the general aſſertion of a remarkable difference of national ſpirit in the reigns of *Henry VIII.* and *Charles I.*

addicted to *ſameneſs* and uniformity, in all their opinions, manners, and cuſtoms, religious and civil; one generation tranſmitting them unvaried to another. In *Europe*, the ſtudy and diſpoſition of mankind is, to ſeek and indulge innovations in all theſe matters. Every age is diſtinguiſhed by ſingularities peculiar to it. Beſides the endleſs inconſtancy of taſte, in the ſmaller affairs of life; which is common to every civilized nation: How various and innumerable are the modes of thinking in religion, the ſchemes of government, the inventions and refinements in politics; which ſpring up, and traverſe the hemiſphere of every *European* ſtate, within a ſmall compaſs of time? When we conſider all theſe evident ſymptoms of mutability in the general temper of the *European* nations; and reflect upon the turbulent and changeable face, which every part of this great *continent* hath worn in all former ages; it may be maintained, as a well-grounded opinion, that thoſe political notions and tyes, by which the ſpirit of liberty is repreſſed in ſome governments, require not any ſtrange viciſſitude of things, or a very great extent of time, to cauſe their diſſipation; and revive the antient and natural taſte of the people in *Europe*, for freedom, and latitude in politics. On account of the *empire of climate* (as a celebrated * author expreſſes it) which is more powerful and perpetual

* L' eſprit des loix.

petual than any other in the world; this their original and inherent paſſion, for a partition of *ſovereign* power, for fixing limits to the exerciſe of it, for liberty, in one ſhape or another, may be certainly expected to make its appearance every where, and operate, leſs or more according to circumſtances, in the revolutions and changes that befal particular ſtates and kingdoms. For, tho' all the revolutions in *Aſia* invariably produce the ſame *deſpotiſm* *; it is rare to obſerve them happen among the nations of *Europe*, without changes in government attending them; and ſome political ſyſtem, either new or different from the former, being eſtabliſhed.

It is the fundamental principle, in the *Aſiatic* governments, to ſtretch forth, and make *bare* the arm of viſible power; and wherever this ſyſtem has been *aped* by *European* princes, they have often practiſed this *terrifying rule*; but not with equal propriety and ſucceſs. The better to uphold their arbitrary ſway over kingdoms, and over-awe the ſpirit of the people, not eaſily reſtrained by the terror of the ſword; another method of *alarm, by inviſible powers*, hath, in modern times, been deviſed, and cultivated under the

* There has been only one univerſal monarchy in *Europe*; that of the *Roman* empire; which ſoon began to be ſhaken in the weſtern ſide; and was long diſſolved there, before its downfal in the eaſt. I am apt to think that the Emperor *Conſtantine* did not commit ſuch an error, as is generally ſuppoſed; when he removed the ſeat of his unwieldy empire to the confines of *Aſia*.

the friendly ſhade of religion. The principles of which have been falſly repreſented, as authorizing the arbitrary domination of *ſovereigns*; and of that preciſe race of them too, which has ſucceeded in any tolerable length of lineage to the throne. In kingdoms once renowned for the love and defence of liberty, the ſanctified doctrine has been hearkned to, with ſuperſtitious and implicit reverence; and the people have penitentially deplored the impious reſiſtance made by their anceſtors. Happy, however, their ignorant reverence may be accounted, as hiding from them the knowledge of the full extent of guilt contracted in every country, by oppoſing the ambition and tyranny of princes. For what tears and penances would be ſufficient, from any *European* nation to wipe away, or balance the many black records of this crime that may be found in the ſeries of their hiſtory? If attempting changes in government, and endeavouring, by various methods, to render ſovereign power leſs oppreſſive, be juſtly ranked among the unpardonable offences of mankind; how ſad muſt be the doom of the bulk of the nations in *Europe;* of whom it may be ſaid, that, from their original, they have ever proved *a moſt ſtiff-necked and rebellious generation!* That an opinion ſo ſuperſtitious as this ſhould be maintained, and the abſurdity of it artfully diſguiſed, in order to ſerve the purpoſes of abſolute government, need not be

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ſurpriſing. By its help, not only is the obedience of the people to their rulers ſecured; but their minds are happily ſoothed, and reconciled to their ſituation. But what end can be anſwered, by venting this ridiculous notion, in any country where the nature of the government is a direct contradiction to it? What ſatisfaction, or benefit could the people receive from ſuch a doctrine, if it were poſſible to make it intelligible to them, in any of the republics of *Europe*, in the kingdoms that are elective, or in thoſe limited monarchies, where the legiſlative authority is ſhared between the prince and the people? Yet, by means of this palpable deluſion, the moſt unnatural antipathies to the nobleſt ſyſtem of political liberty, have been fomented in *Britain*; by thoſe who knew how to take advantage of the weakneſs of bigotry, and blind zeal; which may be obſerved to prevail, leſs or more, in every corner of the world.

SECTION

SECTION III.

THERE is no nation in *Europe*, whoſe hiſtory affords a nobler example of the ſpirit of liberty exerting itſelf, for a long ſucceſſion of time, in ſpite of many obſtacles from monarchical authority; and happily accompliſhing, at laſt, its end, by founding a government upon true principles of political and civil liberty; than what may be collected from the annals of the people in *Britain*. Attached early to kingly government; not ſubjected to it; bold and reſolute in oppoſing every violent exerciſe or abuſe of ſovereign power; yet adhering to the monarchical ſyſtem; prompted always by the ſpirit of freedom; yet apprehending and digeſting only ſome of its ruder principles: They appear, during ſeveral periods of their hiſtory, to have blended together the defence of public privileges, and the diſputes about the lineal ſucceſſion of their princes to the throne. Whilſt the cauſe of royalty divided the nation; and the field of battle was often filled by

parties

parties diſtinguiſhed from each other, chiefly, by their adherence to one or other of the *claimants* of the crown; the general aim of the people after public liberty was not ſo much confounded, as their ſpirits were whetted and hardened, in the midſt of thoſe bloody factions, to contend more obſtinately againſt any encroachments upon it. Some important recognition of national privileges was always obtained; not only, when any conſiderable body of the *nobles*, whoſe power was generally an over-match for that of the king, combined to reſiſt any invaſion of their properties; but alſo, when a controverted title to the ſovereignty made it neceſſary for the prince upon the throne, to recommend his government to the approbation of the people. Upon ſuch occaſions, which were extremely frequent, the public voice never failed to teſtify, how much more deeply affected the people were with a concern for liberty, than by any other political tye or conſideration. In this manner, were many of the principal lines of public freedom chalked out: Yet all appeared, for ſome time, as the ground-work of ſome bold and auſpicious hand, ſhewing the fair, but unfiniſhed deſign of a human countenance. The arm of royalty had ſtill the licentious power of ſpoiling the whole; and often ſeized an opportunity of giving a daſh to the riſing form of public liberty in *Britain*.

By means of a ſignal change in the eſtabliſhed ſyſ-

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tem of religion, the progreſs of literature was favoured; and freedom of inquiry, and debate in religious and civil matters, vigorouſly exerted. The people having now begun to reaſon, with more accuracy, upon principles of government, ſoon perceived, that the liberty tranſmitted from their anceſtors, was not reducible to any regular ſcheme. The *partizans* of monarchy took the alarm; and ſounded forth, in moſt magnificent terms, the high *prerogative* of the ſovereign. The *throne* fencing itſelf round with all ſuch obſolete ſtatutes and uſages, as exhibited the moſt exalted notions of the royal authority; projected ſo wide and deep a ſhade, that the characters of public liberty became almoſt inviſible. The prince and people having thus contracted a mutual jealouſy of each other's pretenſions, every ſlight offence given by acts of power, upon one ſide, was interpreted a violation of right, and an intolerable grievance, upon the other. The royal neceſſities found but a ſcanty ſupply, by arbitrary methods taken, for levying upon the people, money; which they had been uſed to grant by the free ſuffrages of their repreſentatives. Parliaments behoved to be called; and were no ſooner met than they were diſpoſed to recount all their grievances; and to ſpeak loudly of aſſertaining public privileges, inſtead of raiſing ſubſidies. The court was provoked, and could not forbear menaces and inſults. An indignation at many

inſufferable

inſufferable reſtraints upon civil liberty; a reſentment of ſeveral recent outrages, which royal authority endeavoured to juſtify or palliate; and an apprehenſion of ſome more groſs and violent deſigns againſt public freedom, ſo widened the ſore, that had already penetrated deep into the minds of the people; that no *parleys*, expedients or conceſſions availed to remove the growing diſorder of the ſtate. The criſis came; and the multitude readily took the firſt ſignal to arm themſelves, in defence of religion and liberty. In this high ferment of national ſpirit, not only did the animoſities uſual amidſt the flames of civil war, ſpread violently, on both ſides; but that which was peculiar to the complexion and temper of the people in that age; extravagant conceits of a religious kind, operated in the moſt forcible manner imaginable. The crude *mixture* of religious and political opinions, which is commonly found among the bulk of a people, being then ſhook to the very bottom; it was no wonder, that, together with the moſt ſhining inſtances of military ſkill and bravery, of penetrating ſagacity and judgment in the management of particular conjunctures and events, of boldneſs, vigilance, and addreſs in planning and executing the moſt dangerous enterprizes; there may alſo be diſcerned many evidences of a wild, and enthuſiaſtic genius affecting the manners and actions of the *popular* leaders. When, at length, the power of royalty

could

could no longer ſupport itſelf, but ſunk under the ſuperior ſtrength of many parties, armed and animated to over-throw it in the nation; its *cataſtrophe* was accounted by ſeveral of the more zealous *ſectaries*, a *providential reprobation* of the cauſe of monarchy; and that party of them, which got the aſcendent over the reſt, readily concurring with this enthuſiaſtic prejudice, proceeded to render *majeſty* itſelf the victim of their unrelenting rage and ambition. From the irreconcileable oppoſition of party-ſchemes and intereſts; private intrigue and faction in government gained ſtrength. The nation, wearied with inteſtine broils, indured, for a while, the violent uſurpation of ſovereign power by a ſingle perſon, who poſſeſſing an uncommon ſhare of political abilities, and ſuch as were ſuited to the ſpirit of the times, ſupported the credit of his abſolute authority, by the impartial diſtribution of juſtice at home; and acquiring the higheſt renown to the *Britiſh* arms abroad. His ſhort-lived power died with him; its image juſt appearing and vaniſhing in his ſucceſſor.

'Twas not long until the *reſtoration* took place, tho' after ſuch a fatal blow as the royal cauſe had received, its warmeſt well-wiſhers deſpaired of ever beholding this happy event; till the moment of its appearance. Many of the parties, indeed, had reaſon to entertain but very ſiniſter and uncomfortable views from it; and yet all of them, from the experience

of what had paſt, might be convinced that there remained no other imaginable remedy for the long calamities the nation had ſuffered, by bloodſhed, irregular government and anarchy. Its dawn, therefore, produced an agreeable ſurprize; and tended to cheer and elevate the ſpirits of the people, like ſudden and unexpected ſunſhine, breaking out through the gloom of a cloudy *atmoſphere*. The nation's zeal for royalty now run to ſuch exceſs, as might have proved dangerous to public liberty; the *convention*-parliament, as it is thought, being diſpoſed to have ſettled ſo large a revenue upon the king, as would have rendered future applications to the people for ſubſidies unneceſſary. But this critical ſeaſon, ſo favourable for advancing the power of the *crown*, was, it ſeems, overlooked; and the parliament, however obſequious to the court *, condemned, by no ſtatutes, the oppoſition made to royalty; further than was neceſſary to re-eſtabliſh the government upon its former foundation. As the eſtates of the *regicides* were the only forfeitures for treaſon; the royaliſts, whoſe fortunes had been waſted in the late confuſions, hardly obtained

* The two houſes, upon receiving his Majeſty's letters and declaration, only voted that the government ought to be by king, lords and commons. In the new parliament which met the year following; the *acts*, for erecting a court of juſtice for the trial of the late king; for ſubſcribing the engagement againſt a king, and houſe of peers; for declaring *England* a common-wealth; for renouncing the title of *Charles Stuart*; and another for the ſecurity of the protector's perſon; were ordered to be burnt, in the middle of *Weſtminſter*-hall.

obtained an inſufficient indemnification, by the ſum of ſixty thouſand pounds, appropriated by the houſe of commons, for their relief; inſtead of confiſcations, which they expected, at leaſt, to the full extent of their loſſes, from many wealthy families, which had eſpouſed the intereſt of the parliament. A little time was ſufficient to abate any unuſual fervour of loyalty that then appeared; which being excited at a particular conjuncture, could never laſt among a people paſſionately fond and jealous of their freedom; and who would have ſoon retracted whatever conceſſions they had raſhly made, inconſiſtent with it. The parliament now began to take exceptions at ſeveral things that diſpleaſed them, in the conduct of both foreign and domeſtic affairs; while the temper of the people in general, retaining ſomething of its former heat, was eaſily ruffled in matters of religion; the management of which required a higher degree of attention and care, than thoſe intruſted with the public adminiſtration thought fit to beſtow. Schemes of proteſtant uniformity were too haſtily puſhed; whilſt the toleration acts appeared to be calculated for the benefit of *catholics*. Suſpicions of this kind, which the people entertained, were further increaſed, by the court's favouring chiefly, and adhering to foreign alliances with popiſh powers; at a time when a neighbouring proteſtant nation was in the utmoſt danger of being enſlaved. Hence *popiſh plots*

were

were not only credited, often againſt probability; but an opportunity was given to the flagitious and profligate of all parties, to hatch treacherous and intricate calumny; which operating on the anxious fears of the people, required time and pains, before it could be confuted in a regular way. The monarch, careleſs by nature and habit, could not retrieve, by his abrupt applications to the management of affairs, the impolitic and irregular proceedings of his miniſters. His royal brother, on whom the crown was now likely to devolve, furniſhed a freſh ſubject of public diſcontent, on account of his avowed and ſteady attachment to the *catholic faith;* when the imaginations of the generality of people were perplexed and wounded with endleſs alledgances, and ſeeming diſcoveries of popiſh conſpiracies. It was found neceſſary to ſend his *royal highneſs* abroad; to remove the ſuſpicion of his having influence in directing the *cabinet* councils. The expedient, however, did not diſpel the apprehenſions of the nation; no more than the propoſals made by the court for limiting the authority of a popiſh ſucceſſor, ſatisfied the parliament. An *excluſion bill* was inſiſted upon, as the only proper ſecurity againſt ſo imminent a danger; which paſſed in the *houſe of commons*. The court, bent upon diſappointing the ſcheme of altering the ſucceſſion, preſently diſſolved the parliament. Another was called; which, appearing no better affected

fected to the ſucceſſor's intereſt than the former, was permitted to have but a very ſhort exiſtence. From this period, to the end of the reign; the meaſures purſued by the court appear ſo violent and ſanguinary, that they need not be aggravated by any hiſtorical comment. Whether the facts be read in any bare *journal book*, or *index*; or in ſome copious page, which paints and flouriſhes the defence of royalty; it will make little difference. Let it be ſaid, that the court was forced into ſuch ſeverities by the refractory humour of parliaments; and the treaſonable deſigns of ſome contumacious republicans; and that the *proteſtant plots* were as real, and as dangerous to monarchy, as a popiſh one: Yet ſtill it is undeniable, that various arbitrary methods of recrimination were practiſed; and ſuch repeated defiances given to the reſiſtive ſpirit of the nation, as were more than ſufficient to exaſperate it again, and to kindle the general indignation of a people, who had ſo lately choſe rather to bear the miſeries of inteſtine war, than inſults upon liberty, and tyrannical acts of government.

The ſucceſſion, ſo dreaded by the public, and declaimed againſt in parliament, took place; whilſt the wonted ſpirit of the nation ſeemed to ſhrink, and contract itſelf into a penſive and dreary expectation of impending evil. The parliament was aſſembled, and ſhewed no diſpoſition to quarrel with royalty;

and

and having demanded no other ſecurity with regard to religion, than the declaration from the throne; paſſed an act of ſupply; and concurred in condemning two ill-concerted, and abortive inſurrections. The number of the wretched ſufferers was ſwelled, by the extenſion of the laws of treaſon to thoſe who harboured them; and by renewed proſecutions of old alledged plots in the former reign. The parliament, tho' ſtill ſubmiſſive, was ſuddenly prorogued, upon diſcovering ſome diſguſt at the admiſſion of popiſh officers into the army, and the illegal impriſonment of ſome of the peers. The very ſhew and appearance of moderate and legal government was now thrown off, and all the apprehenſions of the people verified, by the open claim of a *diſpenſing* power in the crown over the laws. In the church, in the ſtate, in the army, attempts were made to model every thing in ſuch a manner, as might beſt promote and eſtabliſh an unlimited and arbitrary power in the king. But, by this time, the reſentment, which was faſt rooted in the minds of all ranks of people, had rouſed, and ſtrengthened itſelf; all the lovers of a free conſtitution having formed a ſtrong confederacy with a neighbouring ſtate, allied to *Britain* by the tye of religious and political liberty, for overthrowing this violent and tyrannical uſurpation of public privileges; which they, no more than their forefathers were able to indure. The armament provided

was

was not great or formidable; but royalty in *Britain* trampling upon the liberties of the people, was univerſally forſaken; and could not muſter up the ſmalleſt force to defend itſelf. Without blood, without confuſion, without ſurprize, the cauſe of public freedom prevailed; and for its ſecurity, as had been all along deſired, in a certain degree, the lineal ſucceſſion of the crown was altered. This event, which is far from appearing unnatural or ſtrange, when conſidered as the reſult of national ſpirit, and viewed in connexion with other parts of the *Britiſh* hiſtory; many are early taught to reflect upon with as much horror and antipathy; as if it were altogether unprecedented in the annals of *Britain*, or thoſe of any other *European* nation, to find kings of a different family and race; and as if an infringement of the *hereditary line*, violated whatever was valuable in government.

By a peculiar felicity attending the different *revolutions* that have happened in *Britain*; the balance has always been caſt upon the ſide of liberty; and in the laſt, with more efficacy than in ſeveral others which preceded it. On this account, thoſe repeated efforts of national ſpirit to oppoſe lawleſs and tyrannical government, which mark out many noble *Æras* in our hiſtory, will be admired and applauded, as long as any genius for political freedom remains amongſt *Britons*. A ſyſtem of government happily poized

poized has reſulted from them; where the fundamental powers of *legiſlation*, of *judicature*, and *that* of *executing the laws*, are wiſely disjoined from each other; where the nobles and the people have each a body repreſentative that deliberates, and decides regularly in all national and public concerns; and where, along with theſe conſtitutional checks and reſtraints upon ſovereign power, the voice of the people muſt be heard and regarded. Notwithſtanding the human imagination inceſſantly hunts after novelty, and *ideal* ſchemes of policy muſt attract and flatter it more than all others that ever did or can exiſt; yet, even with the faireſt of thoſe productions of fancy, may the ſyſtem of the *Britiſh* government, as it now ſtands, be compared; and, as a model of public liberty and order conjoined, be found to rival, if not outſhine them. Such political writers appear ſenſible of this, who have ceaſed to imagine plans of government; and conſidered, not what ſyſtems were barely poſſible, but what are ever known to have obtained among mankind. Hence in that noble and elegant work, which comprehends a moſt accurate political map of the world;† we find the picture of the *Britiſh* government exactly drawn, inſtead of the moſt exalted ideas of liberty. Such, indeed, is the comparative excellence and felicity of that conſtitution which the invincible love of freedom has framed

† L' eſprit des loix.

ed in *Britain;* that it muſt be allowed to merit diſtinguiſhed applauſe, even where partiality or fond conceit cannot be ſuppoſed to create admiration. But when this political ſyſtem is conſidered by us, as a ſplendid monument of the ſpirit and genius of our anceſtors; and as what ſtill reflects an image of the preſent character and diſpoſition of the people of this iſland; ſuch a deep impreſſion of its dignity and worth muſt be ſtamped on all true *Britiſh* hearts, that every other form of government will ſink in its figure, and appear mean when put in balance with it; and, without having the ſame luſtre of liberty, not at all calculated for the *meridian* of *Britain.*

It is, however, not unuſual with ſome to imagine, that the effect of abſolute government, or, at leaſt, of a certain ſpecies of it, would not be ſo diſagreeable and pernicious, as is commonly repreſented in free countries; becauſe they have had acceſs to obſerve, or to hear truly deſcribed, the manner and influence of ſuch a ſyſtem; where, yet, the people, inſtead of groaning under the burden of government, appear to enjoy all the eſſential benefits ariſing from the wiſeſt policy. By a ſlight effort of fancy they preſume that the government, under which one *European* nation flouriſhes, may be adopted without diſadvantage or impropriety by another. But it ought to be conſidered, that a certain caſt of manners and character is acquired by every people, from

the particular ſpecies of government to which they have been accuſtomed: For as there muſt be ſome leaning or tendency of the national ſpirit and temper toward a political ſyſtem, in order to its being eſtabliſhed in a country; ſo, by a reciprocal operation, the nature of government being once fixed, contributes to regulate and confirm the ſentiments and manners of the people. The natural genius of a nation that enjoys liberty ſhoots out in various ſhapes and appearances; which abſolute monarchy cannot admit of: The prevailing taſte, the cuſtoms, the habits, and uſages of the people, as well as their political opinions are differently modified under the two oppoſite ſyſtems of government. Therefore, a ſuppoſed tranſition from a ſtate of public freedom to that of ſubjection to arbitrary power, muſt always carry in it the complicated idea of reſtraint, violence, and compulſion; beſides the notion or ſenſe of ſuffering and diſtreſs, which is naturally entertained by a people, on the view of changing a free government for an abſolute one. * When the change is imagined

* This reaſoning cannot be better confirmed, than by a citation from the *Anti-Machiavel*, a book publiſhed, under the name of *Voltaire*; but thought to have been wrote by *Frederic*, king of *Pruſſia*; whoſe heroic fame celebrates the preſent age, and will be the admiration of future times. "The *republican* ſpi-
"rit is ſo exceſſively jealous of its liberty, that it ſtartles at the
"very name of a maſter. We know ſome nations in *Europe*,
"that have ſhook off the yoke of their tyrants, and eſtabliſhed
"a ſort

magined to happen the contrary way, from an abſolute monarchy to a limited one, the idea of violence is diminiſhed, or altogether diſappears; ſince the political effect, in this caſe, is ſuppoſed to be a ſlackning the *reins* of ſovereign power. The inſtance of the *Cappadocians*, indeed, every one has heard of; who having public freedom, or ſome ſhadow of it, at leaſt, offered them, by the *Romans*, rejected the boon, as ſomething too ſublime for them; and about which they had contracted the ſtrangeſt fears and apprehenſions. But it is to be remembered, that the *Cappadocians* were a people in the leſſer *Aſia*; whoſe native propenſity to ſervitude, we have reaſon to believe, was increaſed to a pitch, beyond that of their neighbours; from a peculiar defect both of underſtanding and ſpirit. Since the moſt ironical and opprobrious ſtrokes of character are given them in antient authors.

The character of the people of *Britain*, as much as that of any civilized nation in *Europe*, is allowed to partake of the genius of their free government; and to tally and harmonize with it in a ſingular way.

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" a ſort of natural independence; but we know of none, who, " from being free, have ſubjected themſelves to a voluntary ſer- " vitude: For the *Danes*, in ſurrendering their liberties did no " more than prefer one maſter to many; they made their ſo- " vereign abſolute, with no other view, than to deliver them- " ſelves from the tyranny and oppreſſion of the nobles."

Anti-Mach. chap. xi.

The analogy is ſo obvious and palpable †, that the ingenious author already cited hath ventured to collect the various and peculiar ingredients of our national character and manners, from the principles of our political conſtitution he had before explained. Upon liberty all our national virtues, and our vices have grafted themſelves; and the whole compoſition of our popular ſpirit and genius, ſuch as it is, have ſuch a ſupport from it; that nothing leſs than a total reverſe of the *Britiſh* character may be expected to enſue upon the baſis of public freedom failing amongſt us. It is alſo obſerved, that, from the effect of *climate*, an uneaſy *melancholy* which agitates the mind, and renders the ſpirit liſtleſs, and eaſily ſuſceptible of diſguſt, is extremely prevalent in *Britain.* To a people who have ſuch a biaſs in their natural temper, a ſyſtem of political liberty is congenial; and, therefore, any revolution, that cauſed a deviation from it, or any new and unuſual limitations to freedom, would prove more ſhocking and inſupportable to them, than to a nation whoſe natural complexion is different. As the characteriſtic gaiety of a neighbouring nation, and their verſatile ſpirit are not to be imitated by the people of this iſland; we would, undoubtedly, degenerate far more than they have done, and ſink, every way, in credit and reputation many degrees below them; if, by a change in government, we were obliged

† L'eſprit des loix.

obliged to conform to their ſyſtem of arbitrary power; however moderate it may be accounted.

As a ſentiment of the excellence and dignity of our conſtitution is highly natural and juſt; ſo it is capable of being improved and cultivated to the nobleſt purpoſes. There is not any other better adapted to mitigate party-prejudices, to reſtrain and check the growth of diſaffection and diſcontent; and to unite the minds of men by one general political tye, that are ſo apt, eſpecially in all free countries, to be divided by contrary opinions and conceits, on the ſubject of public adminiſtration. It is not only connected with, but ſtrongly prompts the love of our country, and feeds the flame of undaunted valour, and zeal to die glorioufly in its defence. The influence of this ſentiment may revive or ſupport declining virtue in a ſtate; and ſtrike forth ſome ſparks of that antient *public ſpirit*, which adorns and dignifies the hiſtory of *Greece* and *Rome*. But, in proportion as it weakens and decays amongſt a free people, they muſt fall into a languid and inſenſible temper; without hopes, and without fears, from one ſyſtem of government more than another. Religion, laws, liberty, a country, ever venerable and ſacred names! have, then, loſt their power to warm and animate the cold and impenetrable hearts of men. If ever in *Britain*, the national attachment to our happy conſtitution ſhould become faint, or yield in

point

point of influence to any other principle; if the laudable jealouſy of public adminiſtration, which liberty inſpires, ſhould diſcover itſelf, not only by a diſlike and hatred of *meaſures* and *miniſters*, but be converted into diſeſteem, or indifference for our political eſtabliſhment founded upon liberty: There will be, then, ſufficient cauſe to dread, from ſuch a revolt of the antient ſpirit of this nation, a *revolution* in government of another kind than any that hath yet happened in this country; and the commencement of an evil much more pernicious and incurable than can be ever felt, or juſtly complained of, in any country, where public liberty is preſerved; though more frequent murmurs may be heard, and longer rolls of national grievances be publiſhed under a limited government like that of *Britain*, than any where elſe. For, the *wit* of the deſigning and factious, the *prejudices* of the weak and ignorant, and the *ſpleen* of the diſcontented and dull, from the full ſcope, and indulgence they have in a free ſtate, generally conſpire to ſwell the current account of *grievances*; and to raiſe many unreaſonable and ill-grounded ſuſpicions of the conduct and deſigns of thoſe who have the management of public affairs.

In the moſt flouriſhing periods of the *Roman* and *Grecian* common-wealths, we may obſerve how eaſy and frequent a thing it was for a *tribune*, or a *demagogue*, to perſuade the people of a deſign being form-

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ed by the *ſenate*, by the *conſul*, or the commander of an army, to ſtrike at the root of their liberties; or to lead them out to the field of battle, in order to betray them to the enemy. This is, generally, the temper of a free people: Proud of public liberty, and naturally elevated with it; they are alſo ſuſpicious, and diſpoſed, upon ſeveral occaſions, to imagine the worſt, as well as the beſt, of their political ſituation. They are eaſily induced to believe it not *altogether* ſuch, as it ought to be; and commonly to think it is worſe with them, than it hath been formerly. The people of this *iſland* have been impreſſed with frequent jealouſies, and alarms of this kind; which are, indeed, almoſt as inſeparable from every *body politic*, where liberty ſubſiſts, as a ſhadow from its ſubſtance. Thoſe appearances miſtaken by *faction*, have been made the *unſubſtantial* ground of its hopes; until the experiment of an inteſtine war hath ſhown, that the aptitude of a free nation to complain differs widely from *diſaffection*; againſt the riſe of which to any conſiderable height, the public ſenſe and enjoyment of civil and religious liberty proves a *barrier*, ſo powerful, that the ſtale pretenſions of party, and the ſtill flowing *tide* of factious debate and oppoſition are ſeen to ſwell, and daſh upon it, with little effect.

But it ought, ſurely, to be conſidered by *thoſe*, who have the management of public affairs, in a

realm

realm of liberty; that, where their meaſures and conduct are liable, in any reſpect, to a juſt objection, the moſt unfavourable account of them will be received, and credited by the people; and have ſuch influence with them, as to render the party in oppoſition, however weak it may ſeem, of ſufficient weight to clog the public councils, and counter-act the *ſecrets* of the cabinet. There are, alſo, certain conjunctures, when the national jealouſy is more eaſily inſtigated; as in the time of an unſucceſsful war, which never fails to throw the bulk of a nation into ſtronger fits of *irritation* and gloom. For every people, whoſe natural ſtrength is, in any degree, conſiderable, and much more a free and warlike people expect, beſides the preſervation of domeſtic privileges and liberty, to keep their military name and reputation unſtained; and, if diſappointed of this expectation, are apt to be diſquieted to a greater degree, than with battles bravely fought, and won by the enemy. They little regard, and can ſeldom underſtand what may be publiſhed in *vindications* and *apologies* ſubſequent to the ill ſucceſs, or puſillanimity of commanders by ſea or land; they only reflect upon what the nation ſuffers by ſuch unaccountable miſcarriages; which is certainly a very natural and pardonable reflection.

It is amaſing, on the other hand, to obſerve, what a cloud of diſmal conceptions is conjured up ſuddenly

ly amongſt us, at the *magic call* of oppoſition, when given in the critical time of ſome unexpected loſs, or diſappointment. The eyes and ears of numbers of people are only open to read and hear hideous and ſhameful deſcriptions of the ſtate of *Britain;* contemptible *eſtimates* of the manners, principles, and ſpirit of her people; *anatomical figures* of her political ſores and infirmities; with *death-heads* innumerable! Theſe are the noble contemplations, that charm the ſenſes of many in the nation; and, by a wonderful effect, exalt their heads, and animate their hearts to *patriotiſm.* How happy *Britain* in the blind and invincible affection of theſe her children! Their patriot flame burns, with ſingular luſtre, at the *tomb* of all her national virtue and renown! Tho' beheld as a *charnel-houſe,* loaded with corruption, they have *hope in her aſhes and dry bones!* For the *ſtrong deluſion* of party-ſchemes will prove a marvellous reſource in the laſt extremity. It ſeems, however, to be forgot, for a while, that our political *writers,* have often affirmed, that this deplorable *criſis* of *Britain*'s fate was come; whilſt the dire alarm, inſtead of extorting groans from all parties in the nation, hath only ſerved to ſubvert the credit of one *miniſtry* and facilitate the exaltation of another. The gloomy ſpirit, raiſed from ſome late unhappy emergencies, and prompted by very wretched comments upon them, hath gained ſuch aſcendency o-

ver the imaginations of many, as to hinder their entertaining the agreeable thought, that *Britain* may ſoon merit and entertain a better fortune; by the military ſpirit of her *generals*, appearing to correſpond with the reſolute and invincible valour of her people. For it happens unfortunately, in our country, that a number of pretenders to knowledge in politics have, either, eſpouſed a ſyſtem altogether extraneous, or know no other, but that which is patched up from the *anecdotes* of the day. The preſent conjuncture is, plainly, the *barometer* of much of our political wit; which flows in various and oppoſite directions, according to the vague and contradictory hints and advices given by a nameleſs multitude of news-writers. No wonder, therefore, that a mixed and ſhapeleſs progeny of political opinions, and maxims ſhould iſſue forth from ſuch a ſource: That, ſometimes, it is maintained as an undoubted principle; that *Britain*, as ſecure in her naval ſtrength, ought to avoid all continental connexions: At other times, when the rumour of a *French* invaſion is ſpread, it is held to be the plaineſt dictate of good policy, not to truſt the ſafety of the nation to the uncertainty of winds and tides; and alledged as an evident proof of the weakneſs of a *Britiſh* miniſtry, to put it in the power of our grand and natural enemy, to employ, without a diverſion on the *continent*, her whole force in diſturb-

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ing our peace. Tho' the maintenance of a ſtanding army in *Britain* hath been conſtantly inveighed againſt, as the nuiſance and reproach of a free nation; and the patriots in parliament (during the ſingular influence and prolongation of one *miniſtry*, for upwards of twenty years) argued and proteſted annually againſt retaining a body of regular troops, that ſeldom exceeded 18,000 men; there are people, now, to be met with, who, in contradiction to every notion of danger from an army, with officers holding their commiſſions of the *crown*, and detached from every other intereſt, have ſagaciouſly adopted it as an argument of the corruption of our *government*; that our military commanders and officers are not trained up to their trade, and promoted in the ſame manner, as they are in *France*.

Every human felicity is allayed by ſome different ingredient: Theſe, and ſuch like political *reveries* ſerve to diminiſh the fruition of *Britiſh* liberty. Some people are unwilling to think, that our national happineſs is ſupported upon a ſyſtem, which coincides not with their *noſtrums* in government; and have the folly to imagine that *Britain* ſhould run the hazard of a change, in order to prove whether they are, or are not miſtaken. It were far more rational and generous to conſider, how, the many eminent advantages of our political eſtabliſhment; and, even, thoſe ariſing from the natural ſituation of

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our country are, in part, obſtructed, and ſenſibly impaired by the principle of public UNION failing to exert its perfect influence in *Britain*; without which, the ſplendor of the beſt government muſt be obſcured, and the braveſt nation fall a prey to its enemies.

FINIS

APPENDIX

IT is no wonder to find, that the principles of abſtract reaſoning have been applied in *politics*, as well as in the other branches of *ſcience*. The learned part of mankind have always ſhown their *metaphyſical* acuteneſs and ingenuity, by dreſſing up ſyſtems; and inventing arguments to defend them. Yet, it muſt be allowed, that various forms of government have been prior, in their origin, to all ſuch *ſyſtematic* theories concerning them; that both the rudiments of monarchy, and of a commonwealth, were known in the world, before *philoſophy* was ripe for delivering her dictates, either in ſupport of the one, or the other ſyſtem. The republics of antient *Greece* flouriſhed in opulence and power, before the celebrated founders of philoſophical ſyſtems appeared; and the *Roman* commonwealth, ſuddenly reared up

from the ruins of kingly government, received almoſt all its conſtitutional improvements, during the infancy of ſcience and literature, at *Rome*.

The attachments, which different nations have ſhewn to particular forms of government, may be, juſtly, aſcribed to the diverſity of their natural genius, temper, and ſituation; and to cauſes connected with theſe: Since, it appears, not only, that philoſophical reaſonings never laid the foundation of ſuch attachments; but, that the force of *religious* and *moral* arguments has been generally eluded, when employed with the utmoſt art, to counteract the propenſity of national temper and ſpirit. The hiſtory of the moſt antient times verifies this obſervation: And, though at a certain period of modern hiſtory, which was the *age* of ignorance and barbarizm, a *ſpiritual* arbiter was appealed to in many political diſſenſions that happened; it cannot be alledged that, either, the ſenſe or ſpirit of civil liberty ceaſed to diſplay itſelf, in a remarkable manner, amongſt the nations of *Europe*. It is certain, that religion was ſoon warped with politics; and furniſhed her conſecrated notions, like convenient wedges in a building, to faſten and ſecure the early fabric of government. The monarchical ſyſtem would readily graft itſelf upon theſe; when the firſt *heroes*, and founders of ſtates, in the fabulous ages, were commonly reputed the progeny of the Gods themſelves. No invention

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could be more favourable, than this, to exalt and perpetuate the kingly office and character; when thoſe inveſted with it, in ſeveral countries, could boaſt of a *celeſtial* origin, and tranſmit, to their poſterity, the reſplendent title of the *deſcendents of Jupiter*. Yet, this moſt ſpecious prejudice produced no more than the ſhadow of monarchical government, among the antient *Greeks*: Their firſt kings being, as we find them repreſented by the *dramatic* poets, a kind of *popular* ſovereigns; who exerciſed their limited authority, with a ſtrict regard to the temper and affections of the people. After this manner it was, that *Theſeus*, and his ſucceſſors, ſwayed the ſcepter in *Athens*, till *Codrus*'s time; when they contrived to bury *royalty* decently with him; and, by a refined ſtroke of policy, to prevent its reſurrection, *Jupiter* himſelf was declared king of *Athens*. The whole *prerogative royal*, enjoyed by a long line of *Spartan* kings, deſcended from *Hercules*, conſiſted in their preſiding in the public councils at home; and having the command of the army when employed abroad in the ſervice of the commonwealth.

When *politics* came to be treated as a ſcience, in the ſchools of the philoſophers; their reaſonings were not confined (as in the ſpecimen above cited, *p.* 8.) to the advantages or expediency of this, or the other form of government; but extraneous queſtions were introduced, and many topics inſiſted upon, that tend-

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ed only to augment diſputation, and perplex the main argument. Inſtead of inquiring, how far the great end of civil government had been attained upon the principles of *democracy*, in the various models of it; or upon thoſe of *monarchy*, as eſtabliſhed in ſeveral countries; and which of the two appeared beſt calculated to cultivate the genius and enlarge the felicity of nations: wide excurſions were made into the region of *metaphyſics*, for the ſake of determining, abſtractly, ſuch queſtions as the following; *Whether a ſocial and political ſtate was natural to the human ſpecies?* As if what was ſo univerſal in the world might, in reaſon, be found contrary to nature. *Which of all the ſyſtems of government ought to be reckoned the moſt natural to mankind?* As if a queſtion of ſo general and vague a meaning could ever admit of a more preciſe ſolution, or be properly anſwered in any other way, than by ſaying; that the form of government moſt natural to any people, was ſuch as beſt ſuited their particular genius, temper, and circumſtances. And, again, *Whether a ſtate of ſlavery was authorized by nature?* Which point, the great *father of metaphyſics* has * determined in the affirmative: Becauſe, *ſays he*, nature has endowed ſome individuals with ſingular powers of mind; by which they are fitted to command and bear rule: while the bulk of mankind have only ſuch narrow faculties, as are

* Ariſtot. Polit. Lib. 1.

are fully exerted in obedience. The zealous friends of abſolute monarchy have plumed themſelves upon this maxim; and retailed it as the ſentence of *Ariſtotle* confirming their ſyſtem: Tho', in ſtrict reaſon, one cannot perceive, how it pleads for monarchical more than democratical government; ſince, it is obvious, that the different functions of commanding and obeying are alike proper to both ſyſtems, and have, in fact, been as effectually performed in the one political ſtate, as in the other. The obſervation, when thus applied, is plainly equivocal; and can never be taken as a ſpecial argument for monarchy; unleſs it be ſuppoſed, that *royalty* and genius have a neceſſary or certain connection; and that, in a monarchical government, *heroic* qualities are entailed by line upon kings. It may likewiſe, be alledged, according to this principle, as a particular argument in favour of democracy; that thoſe, whom nature has qualified for having the command over others, are never, unleſs by accident, in a popular ſtate, excluded from this their proper ſtation; ſince they find the places of power always acceſſible, and many opportunities of ſignalizing themſelves: While, in an abſolute government, where the way to preferment is beſet with many obſtacles, men of genius, incapable to ſurmount them, are forced to remain in vulgar obſcurity; deprived of all hopes of rendering their abilities beneficial to the public.

It is well known, that natural, moral, and political ſcience was, in this manner, intangled by the *logic* of the ſchools; which, collecting itſelf, like ſome vaſt whirlpool, ſwallowed down, whatever came within the reach of its *vortex*. Chriſtian *theology* did not eſcape a plunge in the abyſs; and, hardly emerging from it, was covered over with a muddy *ſcum* of inexplicable terms, and other patch-work of *ſcholaſtic* texture and invention; which was liberally diffuſed through the ſeveral ſciences, and helped to produce, among other abſurd doctrines, that chimerical one in politics, of the *divine, indefeaſible right* of kings. This forgery of the ſchools, however, for a long time, was of little advantage to the cauſe of monarchy; being only regarded as a ſecondary principle, ſubſervient to a more fundamental one, in the *eccleſiaſtical* ſyſtem of politics. For, during the dark age of *monkiſh* ignorance and ſuperſtition, the *church* was *all in all*; and, as ſhe had, ſometimes, been made the *ſtalking*-horſe to monarchical tyranny; all civil power was now obliged to couch under the more potent ſway of her *viſible head*. The divine right of kings was, either, ratified, or diſannulled, in particular inſtances; as ſeemed good to the ſovereign will of the *Roman pontiff*. When the monarchies of *Europe* grew more firm and ſtable, the *eccleſiaſtical fetters* were gradually looſed; and, kings profeſſed, ſometimes, to hold their crowns of *God*, and their ſword; and ſometimes,

times, by the favour of *providence*, and the good-will of their ſubjects; or, they ſtill recognized, by certain formalities, when they aſcended the throne, the *paramount* authority of the *ſee* of *Rome*. And, after all, how the political *caſuiſts*, in the popiſh kingdoms of *Europe*, underſtand the point, at this day, is extremely doubtful; as the controverſy has been huddled up, but not determined: And, *Rome*, ſo creſt-fallen as ſhe is, in modern times, finds it neceſſary to manage her much weakened power; and ſilence her once tremenduous *artillery*. But, in proteſtant kingdoms, where they pretend not to build upon the *cannonical* baſis of *Rome*; the argument for the divine right of kings, being ſevered from this its old foundation, has been ſtrained, and twiſted into other more pitiful ſhapes; and ſeems, truly, to depend altogether on the ſuperſtition, and bigotry of the weakeſt minds to keep it alive.

When we conſider the wonderful influence that prejudices of a religious kind have, upon the generality of mankind; how eaſily they are caught in the ſnare of ſuperſtition, and how ſlow and backward in diſengaging themſelves from it: It cannot be regarded as a juſt objection to what has been ſaid of the natural attachment of the *European* nations to political liberty; that they appear, for a conſiderable time, to have yielded themſelves up to the *ſpiritual* tyranny of *Rome*. For, tho' religious and civil bondage may

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be obſerved, often, to accompany each other; yet they have no inſeparable connexion: And, however ſervile and blind-folded the bulk of mankind may be, in point of religion; it does not hinder them, in various occurrences of life, to act upon principles and motives dictated by natural genius and ſpirit, tho', apparently, inconſiſtent with thoſe ſuggeſted from religion, or enjoined them by their ſpiritual guides. Thus, tho' the people of antient *Rome* gave ſuch implicit faith to auguries, that they believed no *aſſembly* could be lawfully held, or a public decree paſs; if the *omens* were declared unfavourable: Yet all the art of the *patricians*, to whom the ſacred office of explaining the auſpices belonged, and who took care to manage it to the advantage of their *order*, did not avail to check the carreer of the *plebeians;* or diſappoint their bold and inceſſant endeavours to have the ſupreme power, and all civil authority centered in themſelves. There are ſeveral inſtances, to the ſame purpoſe, to be met with, even in thoſe periods of modern hiſtory, when the *papal* power was raiſed to its higheſt elevation. The *legates* of *Rome* often pronounced their *anathemas*, when kingdoms were embroiled; without diſarming or terrifying the contending parties: And, upon ſome occaſions, violent hands were laid upon them, for interpoſing their officious authority. Beſides, as the *ſpiritual* ſyſtem of *Rome* (tho' in itſelf the moſt dangerous

gerous engine that tyranny ever contrived to ſubvert the civil liberties of mankind) pretended not to ſuperſede, and aboliſh civil authority in princes, or magiſtrates; but to ſuperintend the general good of a kingdom, and adminiſter ſacred diſcipline to the whole: there aroſe a political advantage, from the rencounter of theſe two powers, mutually jealous; and ſtill endeavouring to thwart each other. The *temporalities* of the *biſhops*, which were, indeed, ſo many great lordſhips in every kingdom, rendered the *clergy* of that order, the moſt powerful and ſteady aſſertors of private property: And, as they claimed to hold their rights independent of the civil magiſtrate; they often patronized, and animated the oppoſition, made by the *laity*, to the ambition and rapacity of princes. Any one acquainted with hiſtory may recollect ſeveral ſignal examples of the *eleves* of *Rome* exerting themſelves, like heroes, to pull down all tyranny except their own. But the *papal* yoke, faſtned in barbarous times upon the nations of *Europe*, began to be ſhaken off almoſt as early as the dawn of literature, in the weſtern world: And, modern *Rome* now ſhows only ſuch monuments of her former domination, as ſerve, like the ſuperb ruins of the antient *imperial* city yet remaining, to verify what hiſtory reports the height of her grandeur once to have been; when ſhe lorded it *ſpiritually*, over many kingdoms and nations in *Europe*.

The feudal ſyſtem, or military tenure of lands, introduced by the *Gothic* nations, who over-ran *Europe;* was certainly, in its original, the ſimpleſt, and, of all others, the leaſt regulated by ſpeculative principles. It proceeded upon maxims ſuggeſted from no extenſive views of policy; but national defence, and fixing the ſhares, into which public property was, at firſt, divided, in the poſſeſſion of certain great families, being its principal and only object; it appeared to reject the higher refinements of political wiſdom, and, in a great meaſure, excluded even the neceſſary arts and improvements of civil life. Yet, rough as the ground-work of this ſyſtem ſhewed itſelf, and incongruous to the ſuperſtructure of good policy; it was conformed to ſuch principles of political liberty as were natural and obvious; it was faſhioned to the unpoliſhed manners, and martial temper of the *Gothic* times: And, hence it acquired a vigour and ſtability, which equalled, if not exceeded that of the profoundeſt inſtitutions of government, in antiquity. By the laws of *Lycurgus*, the people of *Sparta* were trained and diſciplined for the conſtitution; and rendered fit members of that military republic; where the property of individuals was not diſtinguiſhed from that of the ſtate: By the feudal ſyſtem, the plan of government was accommodated to the intractable ſpirit of a people, who gloried in their warlike atchievements; and among whom a di-

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viſion of lands, the fruit of their military toils, naturally took place; and formed a *barrier* to political liberty, ſtronger than that reſulting from any other conſtitutional *balance:* while, by the *entail* of the lands, in a manner ſo ſingular, and unpractiſed in the world, the martial ſpirit and genius of the people was ſuſtained. The antient ſyſtem, reſembling a building extremely regular, could admit of no innovation, or any thing diſſimilar to it; without diſordering and confounding the ſymmetry of the whole plan. The *Gothic* modern one, like a fabric formed upon an imperfect model, and more grand, than accurate in its deſign, ſubmitted itſelf to be improved and adjuſted, according to the meaſure of political knowledge, and the taſte for particular rules and forms of public adminiſtration, that prevailed in countries differently ſituated. Thus various compounds of monarchy and ariſtocracy, ſprung from the ſame root of the feudal ſyſtem; and the principles of demoeracy, tho' longer of coming to maturity, were alſo nouriſhed from it. For, in one reſpect, the feudal policy was ſtubborn; having, like a true original, created maxims of *law*, and early moulded them to itſelf. Their ſtamp was ſuch as became the rude and uncultivated ages; and their coherence with the principles of the feudal ſyſtem was the *nerve* of the *Gothic* governments in thoſe times: but all the ſources of wealth and riches, among the common

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rank of people, arising from commerce and the arts, were shut up by them; and civil liberty could not be diffused, as a popular privilege, under this disadvantage. Any sudden effort of national spirit to burst this fetter upon freedom would have been a dangerous experiment. It was become a *Gordian knot*, in the feudal system, which could not be cut *at once*, like the hieroglyphic one of old, or suddenly untyed, without throwing the whole *body* politic, into violent convulsions. But the slow and gentle hand of time, which, imperceptibly, changes national manners and political maxims, brought about, tho' late, in *Britain*, this necessary transformation; and hath so tempered the feudal policy to the character, and commercial spirit of latter times; when constitutional freedom is supported, without incumbering civil liberty; that now, only from certain traces which still remain, we recognize the former influence of the feudal principles; as we do the swell of the tide, from the impressions left upon the beach, after the reflux of the waves.